



PRAIRIE KRAFT SPECIALTIES

January 2, 2007

Senator Jesse Laslovich
Senate Judiciary Committee
Helena MT

Subject: Senate Bill 318

Dear Senator Laslovich and fellow members of the Judiciary Committee,

I am writing early this morning, February 1, 2007 asking you to support Senate Bill 318, which would amend Montana's Recreational Use Statute providing liability to landowners with private airstrips on their property.

Due to the weather this morning I am unable to come over in person. Hence, I have addressed my thoughts to your Chairman, the Honorable Senator Laslovich, asking him to include this in your hearing this morning as well as provide it to all members of the Judiciary Committee. I learned to fly in Cut Bank and my instructor, Arnie Lindberg, owned a private airstrip out on his farm, where he also operated his aerial application and aircraft maintenance business. Saying this another way, I learned to fly off a private recreational airstrip. Many of the neighbors around the country (Herb and Chet Salmons come immediately to mind) also had airstrips on their farms/ranches. All of these of course are basically recreational airstrips.

Although I learned to fly a long time ago (1963), I remember back then concern over "liability" for someone other than the owner utilizing the airstrip. Most of the people I knew accepted the risk but all were apprehensive and everyone had "heard horror stories." Specifically naming private and recreational airstrips to be included under the umbrella of Montana's existing "Recreational Use Statute" is a wonderful idea. I currently reside in Great Falls and still fly, primarily for business but also personal use. I have been President of the Great Falls Montana Pilots Association Chapter, officially known as the "Great Falls Hangar", as well as an officer of the statewide Montana Pilots Association (MPA). I can assure you I know of no one who flies or is active in aviation that does not think this is a good idea.

I am thanking you in advance for your support of this good piece of legislation, Senate Bill 318. Should you wish to discuss this, please feel free to contact me at 406-727-3192.

Sincerely yours,

Loren Smith

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